

## Reflections

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Summary: Our tribute to one of the forgotten....

## Reflections

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> <em>\_\_The Titanic Trio

> Written by: Stephanie Watson<br> Edited by: Karen Walker and Chris Hodge

> Written: April 15, 2000<br> \_Most people have forgotten you, Henry.

> We haven't forgotten... and we never will.<em>\_\_

> <br> Sunlight...

> <br> As bright as it was, the air was still cold. But then, it was still April, and that was to be expected on the North Atlantic. Still, sunlight was good.

> <br> For a moment, Henry Wilde forgot that he was Chief Officer of the \_RMS Titanic\_, and remembered another place and another time. He closed his eyes, face tilted to the sun, and remembered a time when there were no engines and their steady hum. A time when the teak deck he stood on wasn't the only part of the ship that was wood.

> <br> He smiled. It hadn't been that long ago, had it? It didn't seem like it right then, the sound of the waves drifting up from below and the sunlight streaming down. He missed those times on days like this, when there wasn't much to do but keep up appearances and worry about making the company look good. A time when he sailed on ships of wood and sail. He found that if he thought hard enough, he could still hear the sails billowing in the wind and imagine the deck rolling as she crashed down off the crest of a wave. Spray flew from the bow, shattering the light and forming an intense rainbow for one moment until it finished it's journey to the wooden deck. The salty ocean smell was stronger there, rather than the faint reminder he had here.

> <br> He opened his eyes, looking over the never-ending expanse of blue. He remembered how happy he had been when he first started working on the steamers; the callouses that were on his hands from the ropes faded quickly, and there was less to do in the way of hard

labor. No climbing up ratlines, no joining in the line of men pulling the ropes to raise the sails, no sharing the huge quarters with 50 or more other people, and no fighting gale storms and wondering if you were destined to die that night. He had excelled... in the matter of a few years, he was now Chief on the company's flagship, and after this voyage, he would have his own command; most likely on the \_Oceanic\_. He worked well on steamships... the company thought of him as one of the best and brightest thus far.

> <br> He chuckled to himself. Had he known then what he did now, he would have never left that world. For all of the intense work, the rewards were better. Being able to string a hammock up and lay out in the sun on a long voyage, or the way the motion of the ship rocked him to sleep countless nights. Few passengers, and sometimes none to placate. And best of all, knowing that you were a sailor, not just an officer with a nice title and decent pay.

> <br> The problem with steam was that people forgot. They tried to conquer the ocean. But on a wooden ship, you worked with it. Never trusted it, no matter how much you loved it, but worked with it in an uneasy but honest truce. If you knew what you were doing, you would live. If you didn't, you would die. Simple as that.

> <br> Henry let himself enjoy the sunlight for one last moment before turning to the Bridge, and back to the world at present.

> <br> Sunlight was good... at least, for one moment, he could forget that he was an officer on a luxury liner bound to America and carrying the rich and famous, and remember that he was at heart a sailor. And always would be.

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